

Good evening, members of the Housing Committee. My name is Tom Catricala and I'm a resident of Southington and a member of New Haven Rising. I'm testifying tonight in support of SB4 with amendments to include a 2.5% rent cap and stronger protections for tenants, including a winter eviction moratorium, limits on application fees and late fees.

The issue of rent costs that affects and unites families across the state, both low and middle income, from rural and suburban towns to our city centers, it unites us all. Although I'm currently a homeowner in Southington, this issue hits close to home, as I have personally experienced housing insecurity. My family growing up was under threat of foreclosure often because of unstable income. Although my parents were able to squeeze by and stay in our home, the stress of losing our home permeated my childhood. This was especially true when my father lost his job leading into the 2008 financial crisis when I was only 10 years old.

Before buying my current house with my wife, we were renting in Wallingford. The rent for our one-bedroom was so expensive that it was basically the same as our current mortgage. As a result of high housing costs we have moved farther and farther from work and the communities we are part of.

Even though my struggles with housing have been very real, I'm experiencing all of this without the racial discrimination and systemic disenfranchisement that my neighbors in Connecticut's city centers like Waterbury, New Haven, and Hartford experience.

I believe this much of this legislation is a simple, easy change that will lead to immediate, profound and positive effects in tenant's lives.